

ANNUAL  
HEALTH REPORT  
OF THE  
Hebburn Urban Sanitary District.



—❧— 1918. —❧—



BY  
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HEBBURN-ON-TYNE :

PRINTED BY SMITH BROS., LYON STREET AND ALBERT STREET,

—  
1919.



*To the Chairman and Members of the Hebburn  
Urban District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to lay before you the Annual Health Report for the year 1918, making the eighth for which I have been responsible.

The Birth-rate was 30·7 but the Death-rate reached the unprecedented figure of 24·6 per 1000, this being entirely due to Influenza. At 131 deaths per 1000 births the Infantile Death-rate is higher than for several years for the same reason.

The Influenza epidemic was a calamity. Some idea of its severity may be gathered from the fact that whereas the Death-rate for the district is normally round about 15 per 1000 the rate for November was 72 per 1000 and 125 persons lost their lives.

Tuberculosis appears to be increasing with dangerous rapidity 76 deaths from that disease being registered. The number in 1917 was 46. Mention of Tuberculosis naturally leads on to the matter of overcrowding which is one of the chief causative factors of the disease. Nothing of a practical kind has been done to tackle the problem nor is the outlook in that direction at all rosy.

Towards the close of the year the Inspector of Nuisances (Mr. R. McKellar) was released from military service and returned to his work in the Health Department.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

E. E. NORMAN.

Hebburn,

July, 1919.



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# Annual Health Report.

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## PART I.

### VITAL STATISTICS

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#### Population.

Accepting the Registrar General's estimate, the population of Hebburn in the year 1918 was 24,379 for Birth-rate and 21,758 for Death-rate. For 1917 the figures were 26,374 and 23,660 and I am unable to understand why so large a decline is supposed to have taken place.

#### Births.

The total number of births registered in the district was 751 of which 400 were males and 351 females. Twenty-seven births were illegitimate, 15 being males and 12 females. The Birth-rate was 30·7 per 1000 which shows a considerable increase over the rate of 1917, viz.:—26·5. For the past five years the figures were as follows:—

	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.
Number of Birth ...	784	749	736	700	751
Birth-rate ...	33·2	31·7	30·2	26·5	30·7

### Deaths.

The total number of deaths registered (not including deaths of soldiers and sailors) was 533, the males numbering 287 and the females 246. The Death-rate was 24·6 per 1000 which was not only much higher than in 1917 but also most probably the highest for many years past.

The figures for the last five years are as follows :—

	1914.	1915.	1916.	1917.	1918.
Number of Deaths ...	363	375	350	411	533
Death-rate ...	15·6	15·9	15·6	17·3	24·6

### Infantile Death-Rate.

The number of children who died before reaching the age of one year was 99, of whom 55 were boys and 44 girls. Two of the boys and three of the girls were illegitimate. The Infantile Death Rate was 131 per 1000 births, and the rate for the last ten years is shown below.

Year.	No. of Births.	No. of Infant Deaths.	Death-rate per 1000 Births.
1909	796	100	126
1910	709	80	112
1911	747	94	125
1912	761	120	158
1913	811	98	122
1914	784	87	110
1915	749	82	109
1916	736	77	104
1917	700	85	121
1918	751	99	131

### Zymotic Death-Rate.

The number of deaths from Infectious Diseases (exclusive of Tuberculosis and Influenza) was 39.



Disease.	Deaths.			Death-Rate,		
	1916.	1917.	1918.	1916.	1917.	1918.
Measles ... ..	3	25	1	0·12	1·05	0·04
Scarlet Fever ... ..	...	2	...	...	0·08	...
Whooping Cough ... ..	10	11	10	0·41	0·46	0·45
Diphtheria ... ..	2	2	4	0·08	0·08	0·18
Enteric Fever ... ..	2	1	...	0·08	0·04	...
Diarrhœa ... .. (under 2 years)	12	25	24	0·49	1·05	1·10
Totals ... ..	29	66	39	1·18	2·76	1·77

### Measles.

The year passed without an outbreak of Measles though sporadic cases of the disease appeared at intervals. There was one fatal case in the Central Ward.

### Whooping Cough.

Whooping Cough not being a notifiable disease the only means by which its prevalence can be gauged is through the number of deaths. These numbered ten (of whom nine were females) and happened during the months April to July.

### Diphtheria.

Four deaths were caused by Diphtheria, two males and two females. One was from the West ward, one from the North, and two from the Victoria. One of the cases died in Hospital.

### Diarrhœa.

(Under two years).

Twenty-four deaths were caused by Diarrhœa, eight being females and 16 males. The greatest number were in August (11) and September (6). Eleven were in the East Ward.

### **Scarlet Fever and Enteric Fever.**

For the first time for some years no death from either of the above diseases was recorded.

### **Cancer.**

Cancer was responsible for 25 deaths, nearly all being persons of advanced age. Beyond that, nothing specially noteworthy was observed in connection with these cases.

### **Respiratory Diseases.**

Largely as the result of a vigorous climate, and in part the result of local atmospheric conditions, Chest Diseases claim many victims in our district. In 1918 there were 83 such cases of which some were in all probability originally Influenza.

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Deaths from violence (i.e., burns, accidents at work, street accidents, etc.) numbered 10.

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There were 2 cases of suicide (1) a man aged 59 shot himself; (2) a man aged 34 suffering from pneumonia in his delirium threw himself out of the window.

### **Tuberculosis.**

There has been a significant increase in the number of deaths from Tuberculosis, the total being 44 males and 32 females, or 76 altogether. Of these 55 were Pulmonary Tuberculosis or Consumption, 12 were Meningitis, and the remainder Tuberculous disease of other organs. Nineteen were children of school age, and 31 were between the ages of 15 and 45. No particular area was very specially affected, though the largest number both relatively and absolutely was in the West Ward.

### **Influenza.**

The year 1918 deserves to be held memorable for many reasons and not least for the death-spreading epidemic of Influenza which



swept over the county and over almost the whole world. The disease made its first appearance in the district in May but for some time did not assume a virulent type. In July, however, 15 deaths were recorded, and in addition eight deaths from respiratory disease of which some at least were doubtless of Influenzal origin. During August and September the disease almost disappeared though occasional cases were still met with, but in October it broke out afresh on a wider scale and in a far more virulent form. In October five deaths from Influenza with nine from Chest Diseases were recorded, and the epidemic reached its height in November when the deaths reached the appalling figure of 108 from Influenza and 17 from Chest Diseases. There was a considerable decline in December and by the end of the year the epidemic appeared (falsely as it turned out) to have spent its force. Both sexes and every period of life provided victims, but the mortality rather curiously was less high among the aged and infants than among the more vigorous section of the community. Especially noticeable was the fact that where ventilation was bad or (which is much the same thing) overcrowding existed, there the disease was more virulent, the complications more common and more severe, and the death-rate naturally higher.

The epidemic served to emphasise the pressing need for more efficient nursing than is now available in our district. Fortunately the County Health Visitors, the School Nurse, and to a less extent the Matron and Staff of the Fever Hospital, were able to suspend their ordinary work and gave most useful service, but in too many cases the utter lack of intelligence (to say nothing of professional skill) in the nursing imposed a heavy handicap on the sufferers.

There is great need for a Nursing Association in Hebburn, and as I understand that the Local Authority is not in a position to take action in this direction, I would suggest that the Women's Organisations, which have accomplished much good work in the past, should take the matter up.

## PART II.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The number of notifications of Infectious Diseases was very much less than in the previous year, being only 220 as against 815 in 1917.

In the first quarter there were 70 cases :—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	13
Diphtheria	...	...	...	4
Erysipelas	...	...	...	5
Measles	...	...	...	6
Ophthalmia	...	...	...	2
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	40
Total ...				<hr/> 70

In the second quarter there were 67 :—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	13
Diphtheria	...	...	...	2
Erysipelas	...	...	...	3
Measles	...	...	...	4
Ophthalmia	...	...	...	2
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	43
Total ...				<hr/> 67

The third quarter was the lightest with 38 :—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	11
Diphtheria	...	...	...	1
Measles	...	...	...	1
Ophthalmia	...	...	...	1
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	24
Total ...				<hr/> 38

In the fourth quarter there were 45 :—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	9
Diphtheria	...	...	...	3
Erysipelas	...	...	...	4
Measles	...	...	...	4
Puerperal Fever	...	...	...	1
Ophthalmia	...	...	...	1
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	23
Total ...				45

### **Scarlet Fever.**

The 46 cases of Scarlet Fever were spread over the whole of the year and scattered over the entire district. All were removed to Hospital and all recovered.

### **Measles.**

Measles was at no time prevalent, the majority of the 15 cases occurring during the first six months of the year. There was however one death.

### **Diphtheria.**

Only 10 cases of Diphtheria may fairly be regarded as a very satisfactory record. Rather curiously five of them were in the Victoria Ward which is or should be the least insanitary portion of the town. Seven of the cases were removed to Hospital the other three having unfortunately died before the notifications were received. One patient died in Hospital.

### **Puerperal Fever.**

A single case of this disease was notified, the patient being a young married woman in the Victoria Ward. She appeared to be very well when visited and in a few days was out and about.

### **Enteric Fever.**

No case of Typhoid Fever was notified. While the fact is gratifying and rightly so, it must be borne in mind that Typhoid is

fast disappearing from this country nor can it nowadays fairly be accepted as the standard of sanitation as was the case only a few years ago. It was naturally feared that the war would be accompanied or followed by an extensive outbreak of the disease and the fact that it has not speaks eloquently for the value of Preventive Medicine.

### **Small-Pox and Vaccination.**

No case of Small-pox nor any contacts were encountered during the year. In this connection it should be noted that very few babies (at a very rough guess not more than 10 per cent.) are nowadays vaccinated so that the population is fast becoming unprotected against the disease. What that may mean in the future no man can say, but judging by the gradual extinction of Typhoid Fever and of any other formerly common diseases, one may hope that improved methods of sanitation may be relied upon to prevent a return of the disease.

### **Fever Hospital.**

By comparison with the last three or four years the Fever Hospital has had a quiet time. The total number of admissions was 55, of which 46 were Scarlet Fever and seven Diphtheria. The other two were (1) a middle-aged woman from the West Ward notified as Enteric Fever (subsequently withdrawn) who proved to be a case of acute general Tuberculosis, and (2) a man from the South Ward, admitted at his Doctor's request for observation, as possibly a case of Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis. The first patient died within a few days of being admitted and the second was discharged as soon as it was clear that he was not suffering from the disease suspected.

It gives me pleasure to report that the Hospital stands higher than ever in public estimation and that not the least difficulty is experienced in securing the removal of infected patients. Credit for this is very largely due to the Matron (Miss Blain), who is now in her eighth year of devoted and valuable service.



### **Durham County Council Sanatorium.**

The Sanatorium adjoins the Fever Hospital and is worked by the same staff. It contains twenty-four beds all of which were occupied throughout the year, and is reserved for female cases only. Contrary to what might have been expected there was never a serious shortage of food and the supply of milk never failed. Most of the patients showed improvement in greater or less degree, but whether the improvement was maintained after they had returned to their often insanitary homes may be doubted. There were no deaths. It is to be regretted that no provision has so far been made for dental treatment for these patients. Their teeth are often only carious stumps associated with a high degree of oral sepsis so that they can neither masticate properly nor assimilate their food. The results of treatment in such cases are astonishing, and if provision were made for it as an integral part of Sanatorium treatment I am quite certain that the results obtained would more than justify the expenditure.

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### **PART III.**

## **GENERAL SANITATION.**

There is but little to report under the above heading. Much labour and money will have to be expended before the streets and lanes can recover from five years' unavoidable neglect. The removal of night-soil has been carried on as usual with perhaps rather more than the usual number of complaints of carelessness. If this work were done in the daytime instead of by night it would be at once cheaper and more efficient. Also it would probably stimulate interest in and a desire for the water carriage system. In August the Council's Employees struck work in consequence of a wages dispute and for two or three weeks the towns' refuse was allowed to accumulate until the ash-closets were choked and the back streets fouled while millions of maggots (soon to develop into flies) were met with everywhere. Under such conditions an outbreak of disease was to be looked for but fortunately nothing of the kind happened.



It has not been possible to secure anything beyond the most essential repairs to house property much of which in consequence is badly in need of a thorough overhauling. Overcrowding, to which your attention has been directed in successive reports for several years is as evident as ever and its result is shown in the steady increase of Tuberculosis. No more difficult problem has presented itself to a Local Authority and none more urgent. But in spite of all the Conferences and all the talk about the need for improved housing nothing practical is done. The Council prepared a housing scheme which seemed to meet the needs of the case but when submitted to the Local Government Board was condemned on the ground that it provided too *few* houses to the acre. More recently most of the land on which it was proposed to build was found on expert examination to be undermined by colliery workings and liable to considerable subsidence. And that is as far as we have got.

### **Maternity and Child Welfare.**

The Infant Clinic continues to be well patronised and has proved of enormous value in a direction never contemplated when it was set up. For some months there was a great dearth of fresh milk and at the same time even the condensed variety was hard to find. Such a state of affairs was too serious for trifling, and I therefore asked Mr. Browell (the Secretary of the Food Committee) to request the shop-keepers not to sell milk of any sort to casual customers unless they could produce a medical certificate that it was required for infants or for invalids. The arrangement naturally caused some grumbling and annoyance but was justified in that milk was thereby reserved for those for whom it was an indispensable necessity. Fortunately the Ministry of Food also was alive to the danger and we were able to secure for the Clinic sufficient and regular supplies of Glaxo (save occasionally owing to transport difficulties) by which means there is no doubt whatever that many infants were enabled to thrive who would otherwise have been lost.

The number of children on the Clinic Register, the great majority being under one year, was 702, and they made amongst them 1930 attendances. The amount of Glaxo purchased was 2920 lbs. In addition we sold  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. of Numol (a preparation similar to the better known Virol), and 142 packets of Lactagol. The latter preparation is for nursing mothers, and it is claimed for it that it increases the amount and improves the quality of the mothers' milk. I have very good reason for thinking that such is the case, but many women (the majority in my experience) find the stuff nauseating and repulsive. If it were possible to make it palatable its value could hardly be over-estimated.



# CAUSES OF DEATH IN HEBBURN URBAN DISTRICT, 1918.

CAUSES OF DEATH.			Males.	Females.
All Causes—Civilians only.			287	246
1	Enteric Fever	...	...	...
2	Small-pox	...	...	...
3	Measles	...	...	1
4	Scarlet Fever	...	...	...
5	Whooping-Cough	...	1	9
6	Diphtheria and Croup	...	2	2
7	Influenza	...	77	71
8	Erysipelas	...	...	...
9	Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	32	23
10	Tuberculous Meningitis	...	8	4
11	Other tuberculous diseases	...	4	5
12	Cancer, malignant disease	...	13	12
13	Rheumatic Fever	...	...	...
14	Meningitis.	...	2	2
15	Organic Heart disease	...	22	16
16	Bronchitis	...	10	12
17	Pneumonia (all forms)	...	34	20
18	Other respiratory diseases	...	4	3
19	Diarrhœa, etc. (under 2 years)	...	16	8
20	Appendicitis and Typhlitis	...	...	1
21	Cirrhosis of Liver	...	1	...
21a	Alcoholism	...	1	...
22	Nephritis and Bright's Disease	...	5	2
23	Puerperal Fever	...	...	1
24	Parturition, apart from No. 23	...	...	1
25	Congenital debility, etc.	...	16	18
26	Violence, apart from Suicide	...	8	2
27	Suicide	...	2	...
28	Other defined diseases	...	27	31
29	Causes ill-defined or unknown	...	2	2
Special causes (included above )				
	Cerebro-Spinal Fever	.....	...	...
	Poliomyelitis	.....	...	...
Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age			53	41
	Illegitimate	.....	2	3
Total Births			400	351
	Legitimate	.....	385	339
	Illegitimate	.....	15	12
Population { For Death-Rate			24379	
{ For Birth-Rate			21758	

# Report of Inspector of Nuisances.

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To the Medical Officer of Health.

Sir,

I submit to you a report of the work done in connection with my section of the Health Department. The duties of the Inspector of Nuisances have been carried out by me during the past two years in the temporary absence of Mr. McKellar, and with the systematic inspection of the district, infectious disease, the removal of cases, disinfection of houses, with the removal of bedding, clothing, etc., my time has been fully occupied. Repairs to property have had, with more or less difficulty, to be carried out slowly, but with the return of labour the latter end of the year showed an advancement in having work carried out.

Trusting I have carried out my duties to your satisfaction.

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM NUTT, A.R.S. Inst.

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## **General Sanitary Work.**

During the period under review 203 notices were served for the abatement of nuisances.

### **Housing and Town Planning Act, 1909.**

#### **The Housing (Inspection of District) Regulation, 1910.**

The systematic inspection of houses could not be carried out owing to the depletion of staff and only two houses were recommended for closure during the year, one of which has been vacated but the other was not dealt with for closure.

#### **Privy Accommodation and Conversion of Ash-pits.**

Privy insufficiency is still having attention. Although no conversions were carried out instances of privy accommodation insufficiency will be attended to when better facilities are allowed for carrying out the work.



The following table shows the number of Sanitary Conveniences in the district :—

				Privy Ash-pits.	Privy Box-closets	Water- closets.	Total.
WEST WARD	...	...	9	508	57	574	
CENTRAL WARD	...	...	...	608	28	726	
NORTH WARD	...	...	...	761	14	775	
EAST WARD	...	...	16	775	10	801	
VICTORIA WARD	...	...	2	528	111	641	
SOUTH WARD	...	...	17	796	109	922	
TOTALS			...	44	4066	329	4439

### Factory and Workshops Act.

The number of workshops in the district in which the following trades are carried on :—

Milliners	...	...	3
Dressmakers	...	...	2
Tailors	...	...	1
Plumbers	...	...	2
Bakers	...	...	2
Joiners	...	...	1

Notices were received from the Inspector of Factories relating to the following premises :—

The Bede Metal Works.  
Sproat, Marley and Co.  
Hebburn Rope Works.  
Reyrolle's Works.



### Common Lodging Houses.

The two Common Lodging Houses have been visited regularly and the condition in which they are kept have been of an orderly and cleanly state. Occasionally the deputies' attention have been drawn to minor defects.

### Hostels.

Three Hostels were set up temporarily during the year. Regular visits were made to these premises to ascertain as to the condition in which they were kept. A high standard of cleanliness existed at these premises; disinfection was carried out by me at different times, and bedding, clothing, etc., was removed to the disinfector for purification whenever it was necessary.

### Slaughter Houses.

These were inspected during the year. Limewashing was insisted on where it was found necessary.

### Cowsheds.

There are two Cowsheds in the district, only one at present being used. The general condition of the Cowshed is very satisfactory.

### Infectious Disease.

During the year there were removed to Hospital 55 patients, including 46 cases of Scarlet Fever, seven of Diphtheria, and two cases for observation.

The following table shows the Wards where the cases were reported from :—

Notifiable Diseases.	West.	Central.	North.	East.	Victoria.	South.	Total of each Disease.
Scarlet Fever	10	4	7	7	5	13	46
Diphtheria	...	...	2	...	3	2	7
Observat'n cases	1	...	...	...	...	1	2
Totals	11	4	9	7	8	16	55

The following gives the areas from which Measles were notified :

West Ward	...	...	...	2
Central Ward	...	...	...	2
North Ward	...	...	...	3
East Ward	...	...	...	3
Victoria Ward	...	...	...	3
South Ward	...	...	...	2
Total				15

371 Visits were made to infected houses, and

128 Lots of bedding were removed and put through the disinfectant.

117 Houses were disinfected after Infectious Disease.

21 Schools were specially disinfected during the year.



## Summary of Principal Inspections Made.

Reason of Inspection.	No. of In- spections.
Dwelling-houses.	
General Inspections .....	900
House Town Planning Act Inspections .....	—
Overcrowding of dwellings .....	50
Dilapidated houses, etc. ....	—
Defective paving and cementing .....	—
Defective yard surfaces .....	10
Lime-washing of passages and staircases .....	—
Dilapidated out-houses .....	9
Keeping of poultry in back-yards .....	—
Dirty houses .....	10
Sanitary Conveniences.	
Conversion of ashpits into water-closets .....	—
Conversion of cell-privies into water-closets .....	—
Conversion of dry ashpits into Quine Ash receptacles ...	—
Overflowing of cell-privies .....	20
Defective cell-privy cleansing doors .....	50
Defective cell-privy seats .....	8
Privy buildings to repair .....	9
Drainage.	
New houses, drains tested .....	—
Choked drains .....	19
Inspecting and testing reconstruction of defective drains	—
Drains tested on complaint .....	—
School drainage .....	—
Defective sink waste pipes, gullies, etc. ....	6
Offensive Deposits.	
Pond and rubbish burning, etc. ....	—
Accumulation of manure, etc. ....	—
Water Supply.	
Absence of water .....	5
Defective fittings .....	—

Reason of Inspection	No. of Inspections.
Registered and Licensed Premises.	
Slaughter houses .....	45
Cow byres .....	5
Milk purveyors .....	10
Common lodging house .....	86
Infectious Diseases.	
Cases removed to hospital .....	55
Visits re disinfection .....	371
Removing bedding to disinfector .....	128
Disinfection of rooms .....	128
Schools specially disinfected .....	21
Number of houses disinfected .....	117
Scarlet fever .....	138
Diphtheria .....	30
Enteric fever .....	—
Phthisis .....	186
Typhus fever .....	—
Factory and Workshops Act.	
Inspection of workshops .....	—
Workplaces .....	—
Total .....	2416

# Summary of Notices Served for the Abatement of Nuisances.

	Informal Notices.	Statutory Notices.	Complied with.
Privy-ashpits, to substitute water-closets ..... (Section 39, Public Health Amendment Act, 1907)	—	—	—
Box-closets, to substitute water-closets ..... (Section 36, Public Health Act, 1875).	—	—	—
Ashpits, to substitute ash receptacles ..... (Section 36, Public Health Act, 1875).	—	—	—
Water-closet fittings (basin, etc., defective) .....	1	—	1
Privy buildings, to repair .....	9	—	3
Privy seats, to repair .....	8	—	4
Privy cleansing doors, to repair .....	50	—	30
Privy overflowing upon back streets .....	20	—	20
Privy buildings, to cleanse .....	8	—	8
Drains defective, to repair or re-construct .....	1	—	1
Sink waste-pipes, to repair and trap .....	6	—	4
Yard surfaces, to repay or relay .....	8	—	5
Yard surfaces, to cleanse .....	10	—	10
Houses dirty, to cleanse .....	6	—	6
Passages and staircases, to cleanse and limewash	—	—	—
Roofs, to repair .....	15	—	11
Passages and staircase, to repair .....	—	—	—
Spouting, to repair .....	10	—	8
Floors, to repair and ventilate .....	—	—	—
Ceilings, to repair .....	9	—	6
Walls, damp, to repair .....	—	—	—
Water supply, to provide .....	—	—	—
Overcrowding, to abate .....	20	—	—
Animals improperly kept .....	—	—	—
Offensive accumulations, to remove .....	—	—	—
Manure, to remove periodically .....	—	—	—
Out-houses, to repair .....	10	—	6
Windows, to repair sash cords, etc. ....	—	—	—
Yard walls, to repair .....	—	—	—
Room walls, to repair .....	10	—	3
Scullery sinks, to repair .....	—	—	—
Garbage on streets .....	—	—	—
Limewash, slaughter houses .....	2	—	2
Limewash, cowsheds .....	—	—	—
Totals .....	203	—	128



